

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 SAM-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

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SS-15 USIA-06 SAJ-01 /067 W

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P R 300800Z NOV 74

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 553

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION USEC BRUSSELS

US MISSION GENEVA 609

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 7501

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, ELAB, SP

SUBJ: ARRESTED SPANISH CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC AND SOCIALIST
LEADERS RELEASED

REF: MADRID 7461

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. DECOCRATIC CENTRIST OPPOSITION LEADERS ARRESTED
NOV 26 WERE RELEASTED ONE DAY LATER WITHOUT BEING CHARGED,
AMID SPECULATION THAT (A) ARREST MAY HAVE BEEN SERIOUS ERROR BY
GOVERNMENT; (B) PRESIDENT ARIAS MAY HAVE KNOWN NOTHING ABOUT
ARRESTS; (C) GOVERNMENT EMBARRASSED OVER EPISODE
AND (D) INCIDENT COULD HAVE FAR-REACHING CONSEQUENCES. END
SUMMARY.

2. CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC AND SOCIALIST LEADERS ARRESTED EVENING
NOV 26 (SEE REFTEL) WERE RELEASED BY AUTHORITIES EVENING
NOV 27 AFTER BEING DETAINED 24 HOURS FOR QUESTIONING.
REPORTEDLY NO FORMAL CHARGES HAVE BEEN PLACED AGAINST THEM AND
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THERE IS SPECULATION GOVERNMENT MAY NOT LODGE CHARGES AND MAY

DROP MATTER ALTOGETHER.

2. ROLE OF CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT AND ONE-TIME FRANCO EDUCATION MINISTER JOAQUIN RUIZ GIMENEZ IN AFFAIR HAS ATTRACTED MUCH ATTENTION. AS REPORTED REFTTEL, POLICE DID NOT RAID MEETING UNTIL JUST AFTER RUIZ GIMENEZ HAD LEFT. WHEN RUIZ GIMENEZ SUBSEQUENTLY LEARNED OF THE ARRESTS, HE PRESENTED HIMSELF AT POLICE HEAD-QUARTERS, STATED HE HAD ALSO BEEN PRESENT AT MEETING, AND DEMANDED TO BE ARRESTED ALONG WITH OTHERS DETAINED. DESPITE RUIZ GIMENEZ' DEMANDS TO BE ARRESTED (AND ONE VERSION HE MIGHT HAVE ACTUALLY BEEN PLACED IN A CELL BRIEFLY), HE WAS NOT HELD OVERNIGHT WITH OTHERS. NONETHELESS ON NOV 27, RUIZ GIMENEZ INSISTED THAT HE UNDERGO QUESTIONING FOR MEETING AND MAKE A FORMAL STATEMENT TO POLICE (WHICH WAS DONE), AND INSISTED REMAINING AT PUBLIC ORDER COURT WITH DETAINEES UNTIL ALL THOSE ARRESTED HAD MADE THEIR STATEMENTS AND BEEN RELEASED.

3. IN ADDITION TO 14 DETAINED NOV 26, ONE OTHER PERSON PRESENT, I.E. CHRISTIAN MECOCRAT FERNANDO ALVAREZ DE MIRANDA, HAD ALSO REPORTEDLY LEFT MEETING BEFORE POLICE ARRIVED, AND ALSO REPORTEDLY WENT TO POLICE HEADQUARTERS AND INSISTED ON BEING ARRESTED (POLICE REPORTEDLY DID OBLIGE HIM BUT RELEASED HIM WITH OTHERS NOV 27). ADDITIONALLY, AND SIGNIFICANTLY, TWO OTHER PERSONS ALSO REPORTEDLY WERE PRESENT AT MEETING, I.E. MANUEL

DIEZ ALEGRIA (WHO IS THE LAWYER SON OF RECENT RETIRED SPANISH CHIEF OF THE HIGH GENERAL STAFF, AND WHO REPORTEDLY IS A MEMBER OF DIONISIO RIDRUEJO'S NEW SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC USBE GROUP) AND A LAWYER NAMED CARLOS ALONSO DE VELASCO, BUT POLICE DECLINED TO ARREST THEM. REPORTEDLY POLICE CLAIMED THEY COULD NOT ARREST TWO BECAUSE BOTH DIEZ-ALEGRIA AND ALONSO DE VELASCO WERE EMPLOYEES OF BANKING CONSULTING OFFICE WHERE MEETING TOOK PLACE AND THUS THEIR PRESENCE WAS JUSTIFIED. (THIS ARGUMENT, HOWEVER, WAS NOT USED BY POLICE WITH RESPECT TO ANTONIO GARCIA LOPEZ, WHO IS MANAGER OF BANKING CONSULTING FIRM, SINCE GARCIA LOPEZ WAS DETAINED ALONG WITH OTHERS).

4. ACCORDING PRESS, RUIZ GIMENEZ INDICATED THAT VARIOUS FOREIGN EMBASSIES IN MADRID HAD EXPRESSED OFFICIAL INTEREST IN DETAINEES, AMONG WHICH WERE FRENCH, WEST GERMAN AND ITALIAN EMBASSIES.
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5. POLICE MAY HAVE DELIBERATEDLY WAITED UNTIL RUIZ GIMENEZ LEFT BEFORE MAKING ARRESTS, SO AS TO AVOID EMBARRASSMENT OF AN ARRREST OF A ONE-TIME FRANCO CABINET MINISTER AND AMBASSADOR TO VATICAN (SOME OBSERVERS BELIEVE HE WAS IMMUNE TO ARREST FOR THIS REASON) AND RENOWNED INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC FIGURE MIGHT PROVOKE (PRESS HAS NOTED THAT THIS FIRST TIME A FORMER FRANCO MINISTER HAS BEEN QUESTIONED BY POLICE FOR A POLITICALLY-

MOTIVATED INCIDENT). THERE ALSO SUSPICION GENERAL DIEZ ALEGRIA'S SON WAS DELIBERATELY NOT ARRESTED BECUASE IT WOULD ALSO PROVE HIGHLY EMBARRASSING TO REGIME.

6. THERE ARE TWO THEORIES ABOUT GOVERNMENT'S MOTIVES FOR THESE ARRESTS: (A) THAT THIS REFLECTED A DECISION MADE AT A VERY HIGH LEVEL TO CRACK DOWN ON OR ATLEAST TO WARN THESE MODERATE OPPOSITIONISTS, OR (B) THAT DECISIION MAY HAVE BEEN TAKEN AT A MUCH LOWER LEVEL, MAY NOT HAVE BEEN APPROPRIATELY CLEARED, AND MIGHT BE CASE OF THE "RIGHT HAND NOT KNOWING WHAT LEFT HAND WAS DOING" WITHIN GOVT. THERE IS GROWING BELIEF SECOND POSSIBILITY MAY HAVE BEEN MORE LIKELY, AND THAT ABRUPT RELEASE DETAINEES WITHOUT ANY CHARGES BEING PRESENTED TO DATE MAY BE DUE TO POSSIBLE REALIZATION BY GOVT THAT ARRESTS WERE SERIOUS ERROR. ADDITIONALLY, IT WIDELY RUMORED PRESIDENT ARIAS NAVARRO HAD KNOWN NOTHING ABOUT ARRESTS, MUCH LESS AUTHORIZED THEM.

7. THOSE DETAINED REPORTEDLY ATTESTED TO POLICE THAT THEIR PRESENCE AT MEETING WAS TO DISCUSS POSSIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING NEW MAGAZINE SOMEWHAT ALONG LINES OF "CUADERNOS PARA EL DIALOGO". HOWEVER, MOST (INCLUDING, PRIVATELY, SEVERAL OF THOSE ARRESTED) ACKNOWLEDGE THAT MAGAZINE STORY IS SIMPLY A FALSE ALIBI. REAL REASON FOR MEETING, IT IS ACKNOWLEDGED, WAS TO AGREE ON COMMON PROGRAM FOR THESE SEVEN CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC AND SOCIALIST GROUPS, TO EXPLORE FEASIBILITY OF LAUNCHING EXPECTED CENTRIST "DEMOCRATIC CONFERENCE", AND TO DISCUSS ATTITUDES THESE CENTRISTS AND MODERATE GROUPS SHOULD HAVE TOWARDS PCE-SPONSORED "DEMOCRATIC JUNTA" IN PARIS.

8. THIS EPISODE COULD HAVE FAR-REACHING CONSEQUENCES. REGARDING EFFORTS TO FORM NON-COMMUNIST "DEMOCRATIC CONFERENCE" COALITION, SOME SOURCES BELIEVE ARRESTS MAY HAVE DEALT THIS CONFIDENTIAL

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EMBRIONIC GROUPING A SERIOUS BLOW AND PUSHED THE GROUPS TOWARDS RIVAL "DEMOCRATIC JUNTA", ALTHOUGH OTHERS BELIEVE IT WILL HAVE OPPOSITE EFFECT I.E. IT MAY PROMPT VACILLATING GROUPS REPRESENTED AT MEETING (SOME OF WHICH HAVE PARTISANS OF JOINING "DEMOCRATIC JUNTA" AND SHARING POWER WITH PCE, ALTHOUGH MAJORITY SENTIMENT IN THESE GROUPINGS APPEARS TO BE AGAINST PARTICIPATION IN "DEMOCRATIC JUNTA") TO FINALLY GO AHEAD AND ESTABLISH "DEMOCRATIC CONFERENCE" NOW THAT THEY HAVE ACHIEVED GREATER POPULARITY AND PRESTIGE RESULTING FROM ARRESTS, AND SINCE THEY MAY HAVE DEMONSTRATED THAT GOVERNMENT MAY BE AFRAID TO DEAL FIRMLY WITH THESE CENTRISTS GROUPS. IT ALSO LIKELY EMBARRASS MANY IN THE GOVERNMENT, INCLUDING POSSIBLY PRESIDENT ARIAS.

9. EPISODE HAS EVEN REACTIVATED ONCE AGAIN RUMOR ARIAS MAY RESIGN IMMEDIATELY. IT APPEARS EVIDENT THAT GROUPS WHO CAN TAKE

MOST COMFORT AT LEAST IN SHORT TERM FROM EPISODE AND EMBARRASSMENT
IT MAY BE CAUSING ARIAS AND REGIME "LEBERALIZERS" ARE INCREASINGLY
PROMINENT REGIME HARD-LINERS SUCH AS GIRON AND THERE IS EVEN
SOME SUSPICION THESE SAME REGIME HARD-LINERS MAY BE ONES
RESPONSIBLE FOR THESE ARRESTS.

10. THIS EPISODE IS SOMEWHAT COMPARABLE TO FAMOUS
1962 MUNICH EPISODE, WHEN VARIOUS MODERATE PROMINENT
OPPOSITION FIGURES WERE ARRESTED AND IMPRISONED OR EXILED UPON
THEIR RETURN FROM A BROAD SPANISH OPPOSITION MEETING IN MUNICH.
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